

(in lakh tonnes)

Foodgrains	2005-06	2006-07
Wheat	147.9	92.3
Gram	1.1	Nil
Barley	Nil	Nil
Masoor	0.05	Nil

(c) The low level of procurement of wheat in RMS 2006-07 was on account of high ruling market prices, lower than the targeted production of wheat, negative market sentiments, low market arrivals and more active participation by private traders.

Since the prices of gram and masoor were ruling higher than MSP announced by the Government of India, no procurement of these foodgrains could be made in RMS 2006-07.

Prices of commodities

†461. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that traditional traders of the country are facing heavy financial losses due to entry of foreign companies in the retail market recently and due to sale of pulses, vegetables, fruits by them on reduced prices in malls of Delhi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action being taken to bring parity in prices of the said commodities; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Government do not maintain data in this regard. As per extant policy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is not permitted in retail trade, except in 'single' brand retail trade.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of reply to (a) and (b) above.

Payments of sugarcane dues

462. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is heavy arrears of payments of sugarcane to the farmers from various sugar mills in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the amount of arrears and the reasons therefor, State-wise; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH) (a) and (b) Cane Price arrears as on 31.01.2007, for the current sugar season 2006-07 are Rs. 1494.82 crores (provisional) which are 15.64% of the total cane price payable as on that date. Cane price arrears for the corresponding month of the last sugar season 2005-06 were Rs. 1088.86 crores (Provisional) which were 12.20% of the total cane price payable as on that date. Besides, a sum of Rs. 284.81 crores is outstanding, as on 31.01.2007, as cane price arrears in respect of sugar season 2004-05 and earlier. A statement indicating the State-wise details of cane price arrears is enclosed in Statement (See below). The cane price arrears arises mainly due to sickness of the sugar mill, poor financial position, higher cost of production, lower sales realization, higher inventory of stocks, high level of sugar production and pending court cases etc.

(c) The responsibility of ensuring timely payment of cane price arrears to the sugarcane growers lies with the respective State Governments who have been delegated necessary powers to ensure payment of cane price arrears. However, the Central Government, on its part, regularly monitors the position of payment of cane price arrears and it had taken necessary measures such as creation of buffer stock, financial assistance to State Governments to help them in clearing cane price arrears etc. when required.